Attorney Docket: 1999DE507
Serial No.: 10/070,071
Art Unit: 1623

Please add the following ABSTRACT

The invention relates to low-viscous cellulose ethers that flocculate in hot water and have a high degree of purity and whiteness. The invention also relates to a method of producing the same by acidic-catalyzed hydrolytic depolymerization in the presence of an oxidation agent, as well as the use thereof.

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the depolymerization of hot water-coagulable cellulose ethers by hydrolytic degradation by means of acids, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the degradation is carried out at a temperature above the cloud point of the cellulose ether as concentrated aqueous slurry, and ~~in that~~ in addition ~~oxidizing agents are~~at least one oxidizing agent is added to the concentrated aqueous slurry, before, during and/or after the depolymerization in acidic or neutral medium.

2. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein methyl-, ethyl-, propyl-, hydroxyethylmethyl-, hydroxypropylmethyl-, ethylhydroxyethyl- or ethylmethylcellulose is employed as cellulose ether.

3. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the degraded cellulose ether has a Höppler viscosity, measured as 2.0% solution (absolutely dry) in water at 20°C, of ≤ 50 mPas.

4. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein mineral acids and/or organic acids are employed as acids.

5. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~wherein hydrochloric, sulfuric, nitric and/or phosphoric acids are employed as mineral acids.

6. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the ratio of water to cellulose ether does not exceed 10:1 by weight.

7. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein peroxo compounds, perborates, sodium chlorite, halogens and/or halogen oxides are employed as the at least one oxidizing ~~agents~~agent.

8. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~wherein hydrogen peroxide is employed as the at least one oxidizing agent.

9. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the at least one oxidizing agent is employed in an amount of from 0.01 to 20% by weight based on the cellulose ether.

10. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims, characterized in that,~~claim 1, wherein after the depolymerization, the degraded cellulose ether is washed with at least one aqueous solution of a basic salt at a temperature above the cloud point of the degraded cellulose ether in order to adjust the aqueous solution of the degraded cellulose ether to a pH in the range from 5.5 to 8.0.

11. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~wherein sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium sulfate and/or sodium bisulfate is employed as the salt.

12. (Currently Amended) A methylhydroxypropylcellulose with a Höppler viscosity, measured as 2.0% solution (absolutely dry) in water at 20°C of ≤ 50 mPas, obtainable by a process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~claim 1.

13. (Currently Amended) A methylhydroxypropylcellulose ~~with~~ with a Höppler viscosity, measured as 2.0% solution (absolutely dry) in water at 20°C, of ≤ 50 mPas, ~~characterized in that it~~wherein the methylhydroxypropylcellulose has a whiteness, determined by measuring the reflectance in % at 447 nm against a white standard (enamel white standard; reflectance setting = 71.5%), which is above 50%, with a particle size distribution in which the proportion of particles with a size of < 125 µm does not exceed 50%.

14. (Currently Amended) A methylhydroxypropylcellulose as claimed in claim 13, with a Höppler viscosity of from 5 to 50 mPas, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the whiteness, determined by measuring the reflectance in % at 447 nm against a white standard (enamel white standard; reflectance setting = 71.5%), is above 60%.

15. (Currently Amended)A methylhydroxypropylcellulose as claimed in claim 13 or 14, ~~characterized in that it~~wherein the methylhydroxypropylcellulose has a salt content of less than 0.4% by weight.

16. (Currently Amended) A methylhydroxypropylcellulose as claimed in ~~at least one of Claims 13 to 15, characterized in that it~~claim 13, wherein the methylhydroxypropylcellulose has a content of methoxy groups in the range from 28 to 32% by weight and a content of hydroxypropyl groups in the range from 5 to 9% by weight.

17. (Currently Amended) A coated composition having a coating, wherein coating comprises the methylhydroxypropylcellulose~~The use of the methylhydroxypropylcelluloses~~ as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 13 to 16 for coating~~claim 13, and wherein the composition is selected from pharmaceuticals ~~or~~ and seeds ~~and for use in cosmetics, foodstuffs or in suspension polymerization~~.

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18. (New) A composition comprising the methylhydroxypropylcellulose as claimed in claim 13, wherein the composition is selected from the group consisting of cosmetics, foodstuffs and suspension polymerization compositions.